

Commission On Ministry Report

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

November 1981

Statements from interviews & questionnaire :

"I love my pastor and my church. He is the most prepared pastor I have ever heard. He is a dedicated, fine Christian person and lives it. Hope he grows old with us." . . . Layperson

"It is most difficult and frustrating work at times; at other times, it is most rewarding and joyful." . . . Pastor

"I've got to get out! Can you help me? . . Pastor

"We think we have one of the best ministers available." . . . Layperson

"There seems to be some help for churches who get into bad situations with a pastor . . . this is getting more common. HELP!" . . . Layperson



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Commission On Ministry Report

Presented to the
151st Annual Session
of the
**Baptist State Convention of
North Carolina**

**Greensboro, North Carolina
November 2-4, 1981**

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Report: Commission on the Ministry

"I love my pastor and my church. He is the most prepared pastor I have ever heard. He is a dedicated, fine Christian person and lives it. Hope he grows old with us."

"It is most difficult and frustrating work at times; at other times, it is the most rewarding and joyful."

"I've got to get out! Can you help me?"

"We think we have one of the best ministers available."

"There seems to be some help for churches who get into bad situations with a pastor . . . this is getting more common. HELP!"

"This is a very good questionnaire - I only pray it can help with our dangerous situation. Much prayer and listening to the Lord's guidance is needed."

These personal statements, reported to our Commission, reflect the wide range of feelings regarding pastor-church relations. These persons represent the tone of our findings.

On one hand, there is significant strength and good will flowing between pastor and congregation. In the study, the Commission found many church members and ministers who wanted to register their appreciation for this relationship. Clearly, most churches enjoy an effective relationship with their pastor which greatly enhances the ongoing ministry of our Lord.

Yet, on the other hand, there is widespread pain and frustration in this relationship, approaching epidemic proportions. With pastor-church relations, it may be, "the best of times and the worst of times." We minister during a time for gratitude; a time for concern.

Beginning

It was out of this emerging concern that a **Commission on the Ministry** was established by the 1980 North Carolina Baptist State Convention with the following mandate:

*The Commission be asked to make an intensive study, survey, and analysis of trends and conditions in the churches and in the ministry that are affecting **pastor-church relations** and that the Commission bring to the 1981 Convention their report of findings and recommendations. The Commission's recommendations will relate to ways of improving pastor-church relations, the status and needs of pastors (include all church staff) in salaries, housing, travel allowance, insurance and retirement.*

Composition of Commission

The Commission appointed by the Baptist State Convention officers consisted of eight laypersons, seven ministers and five ex-officio members. There were three lay women: an active denominational worker and homemaker, pastor's wife and homemaker, pastor's wife and school psychologist. The five lay men were: an Internal Revenue Service auditor, physician, retired regional public school superintendent, member of the General Assembly, and school administrator.

The minister representation was as follows: two pastors, pastoral counselor, director of missions, two Baptist State Convention staff members, one seminary professor. The Commission represented every region in the state. A list of Commission members may be found at the conclusion of the report.

The Commission utilized the skills of a professional process consultant to assist it in its work.

Procedure of Study

The Convention held their first meeting on February 26, 1981. The Commission envisioned their work in two primary phases: first, to conduct a study of needs; and second, to formulate recommendations which would address the needs uncovered in the study.

The Study of Needs

The gathering of information proceeded along four lines:

1. Questionnaire

A separate questionnaire for pastors and members of congregations was formed and distributed as widely as possible throughout the state. These questionnaires were published in the *Biblical Recorder*, mailed directly, and sent to Directors of Missions with the request that they reproduce and promote these in their local associations. **3,776** questionnaires were returned by church members, **447** questionnaires were returned by pastors.

2. Personal Interviews

Persons completing the questionnaire were given the option of requesting a personal interview. The purpose of the interview was to allow for pastors or lay persons to express concerns, observations, or recommendations to the Commission. These interviews were not designed for ventilation of complaints or problem solving. **121** persons requested and most of these received an interview, either face-to-face or via telephone.

3. Group Interviews

Certain groups possessed important information concerning needs in minister-congregation relations. These groups were:

- 9 seminary professors
- 23 pastoral counselors of ministers and their families
- 4 pastors who frequently counseled other pastors
- 6 North Carolina Convention denomination leaders
- 96 lay leadership of congregations recently experiencing "firing" or "forced resignation" of their pastor

138 persons were involved in these group interviews.

4. Review of Other Studies

Considerable research and writing concerning aspects of pastor-church relations have been done. This material was surveyed by some members of the Commission for possible application to our current study.

Processing of Information

The information received from these four sources was carefully studied by our Commission. Attention was given to prominent themes and recurring needs and stresses.

In keeping with the Commission's mandate, the primary focus was on the pastor-church relationship. However, the multiple staff ministers were included in the Compensation Study and given first priority in our recommendation for future study. We regret the general exclusion from this study of staff ministers and their special needs in relating to both pastor and congregation.

Findings

A summary of these trends and needs is included below under **Part I: Findings**. The needs and opportunities in pastor-church relations seem to cluster under seven categories:

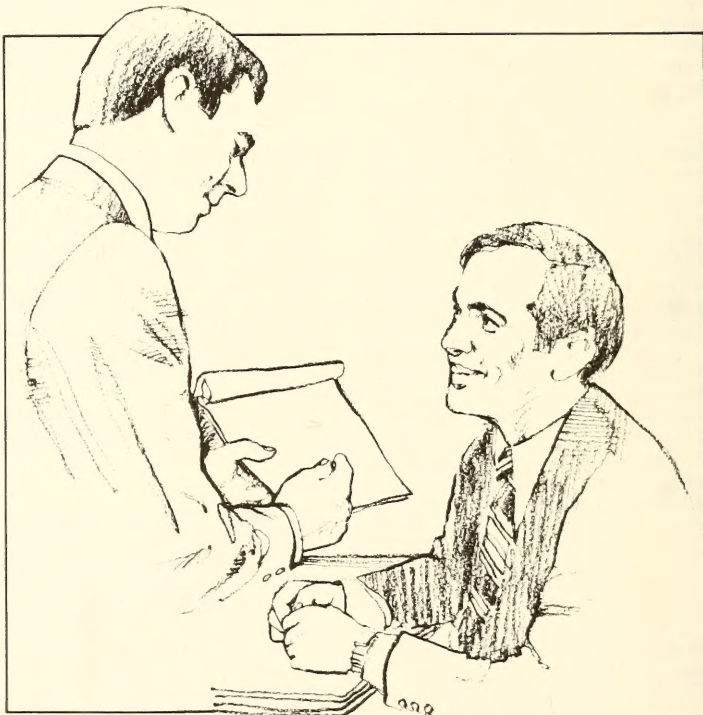
- Role confusion of the pastor
- Leadership of the congregation
- The care of the minister
- Transitions in ministry
- The minister's compensation
- Cultural influences on pastor-church relations
- North Carolina Denominational resources

Recommendations

Next, recommendations are suggested to address effectively and creatively the current needs reflected by the Commission's study.

The recommendations are presented in six divisions:

- A. Appreciation for Healthy Pastor-Church Relationships
- B. Establishing a Pastor-Church Relationship
 1. Assistance to Pastor Search Committees
 2. Pastor-Church Covenant
 3. Guidelines for Pastor-Church Conduct
 4. Adequate Compensation for Ministers
 5. Seminars on Beginning New Pastorates
- C. Maintaining An Effective Pastor-Church Relationship
 1. Pastoral Support and Evaluation
 2. Personal and Professional Growth for Pastors
 3. Directors of Missions
 4. Ministers' Marriages
 5. Ministers' Wives
 6. Ministers' Support Groups
- D. Conflict Affecting the Pastor-Church Relationship
 1. Outside Consultation Available
 2. Ministers' Care Program
 3. WATS (800) Line for Consultation
- E. The Future Studies in Minister-Church Relationships
- F. The Administrative Structure for the Convention's Continuing Response to Pastor-Church Relationships



Part I: "Findings"

"Many People Disagree About the Pastor's Responsibility!"

Role Confusion of the Pastor

"The church of today generally is guilty of depending on the pastor to be all things to all people, leaving little time for spiritual growth of pastor or church."

"I feel there is too much professionalism in the ministry and a growing dearth of warm fellowship with the congregation."

"We have a good preacher but do not have a pastor."

"Pastors need to remember the lay schedule and trim the fat off of church schedules."

"I would like to see a pastor become a shepherd not chained to an office, numbers, finances, civic clubs, social activities, endless meetings, busy work."

"Our pastor is a wonderful speaker and serious person but hard to get close to. I wish he could visit more . . . he also needs to be a stronger administrator."

These personal comments represent a recurring theme of confusion and dissatisfaction with the role and performance of the pastor. Considerable stress in pastor-church relations arises from such lack of clarity and mutual understanding. This stress stems from at least five sources:

1. **Pastor's Unrealistic Expectations.** Ministers often develop unrealistic expectations of themselves and their congregations. They enter the ministry with idealistic visions which can become impossible, unbending demands upon themselves and their congregations. The models for pastoral ministry, formed during early years of personal development and professional education, may be at great variance from actual realities of a local situation. Some ministers are prone to complain about unrealistic demands, yet nevertheless, expect themselves to meet them all.

2. **Church Members' Unrealistic Expectations.** Often lay persons carry unrealistic expectations of their ministers. Members of a congregation might expect the same minister to be a highly competent pastor, preacher, administrator, teacher, counselor, evangelist, tireless worker, model husband, father, and Christian. The minister remains a generalist in an age of specialization.

3. **Conflicting Expectations.** The study also revealed conflicting, contradictory expectations. Many ministers end up spending much time and energy in roles for which they have little training or interest - particularly administration. While some lay persons welcomed the awareness that ministers need to be competent administrators, others saw this trend as making them less available in pastoral and evangelistic visitation. Clearly, members and ministers differ as to what functions of ministry need to be accentuated. This "push-pull" around what a pastor is to be and do was a prominent thread in the information received.

4. **Vague Expectations at the Beginning.** Initial discussions and agreements between the new minister and congregation concerning the role is seldom adequate. Mutual expectations are generally left vague. Furthermore, these unclear, non-negotiated agreements leave no valid basis for evaluation. A defective, incomplete covenant at the beginning can account for conflict at a later time.

5. **Mission of the Congregation Unclear.** The larger congregation is also generally confused about its own role in Christ's ongoing ministry. If there is general lack of agreement within the congregation as to its mission, then confusion around the minister's leadership role is inevitable. This means, at this point in history, the pastor's role will remain nebulous, contradictory to some

degree. There will be no clear role description, agreed upon by all members.

"Conflict Sure Happens a Lot Around Leadership!"

Leadership of the Congregation

"Why are pastors afraid to be the head of the church? Ours will not make a commitment one way or another. He passes the buck anytime he can."

"We need an acceptable way to dialogue with the pastor."

"My pastor is so domineering that most church members are afraid to disagree with his requests."

"My greatest desire is to be the shepherd of the flock. I do not want to be led around but to lead in love."

"Emphasize preaching and let the laymen run the church!"

These unsigned comments give a flavor of the conflict in leadership frequently occurring between the pastor and the congregation. From the information received, the Commission drew the following observations.

1. **Leadership Style.** The style of a minister's leadership frequently does not fit the desires and needs of the congregation. The two extremes generate considerable conflict - namely, the leader (pastor or member) who is **domineering** and the leader (pastor or member) who is overly **permissive**. Our findings reveal a preference among respondents for a partnership between pastor and laypersons with the responsibility for leadership being shared. Yet, guidance in learning how to share leadership seems to be needed.

2. **Vague Leadership Expectations.** Expectations regarding leadership seem to remain vague, inviting eventual disillusionment, frustration, and competition. "How is our congregation to be led?" "How are decisions to be made?" "What is the role of the pastor, staff ministers, deacons and congregation in the leadership of the church?" These seem to be questions often not raised, or if raised, not resolved adequately.
3. **Confusion in Attitude toward Conflict.** There is confusion about the Christian attitude toward conflict. Is conflict inevitable in any close relationship? Is it wrong? How can Christians confront strong differences in a creative, redemptive manner? The study demonstrated this confusion and subsequent need for theological as well as practical assistance.
4. **Evaluation.** Slightly over 50% of the pastors who responded to the questionnaire indicated interest in receiving feedback on their ministry from members of their congregations. This information, along with other interest expressed in interviews, may indicate an openness and desire for periodic evaluation of both pastoral and lay leadership.
5. **Procedures for Handling Differences.** Congregations have seldom worked out procedures by which differences between the minister and church can be addressed. Some churches have maintained the Pastor-Search Committee as a Pastor-Church Relations Committee for the ongoing purpose of assessing and discussing concerns about the relationship. The clear need exists for some provision with guidelines, drawing upon Christian perspectives, to be available for both the minister and congregation during times of serious differences.
6. **Diversity within Congregations.** While a congregation gathers around the unifying basic vision of God's love in Jesus Christ, it remains a very diverse group of people. A pastor must be willing and skillful in working with a wide range of differences.
7. **Reactive vs. Proactive.** The leadership of a congregation tends to be reactive by responding to crises and needs both within the church

and community. The study revealed the need for the congregation leadership also to become intentional and proactive, namely, envisioning, planning and setting goals for ministry.

8. **Training in Handling Conflict.** There is a frequent lack of training by both clergy and laity in managing the conflict creatively and redemptively when it emerges between the pastor and congregation.
9. **Conflict Focuses Around Leadership.** In the Commission study, the more serious conflicts seemed to be between the pastor and leadership (e.g. other staff ministers, deacons) rather than between the pastor and segments of the larger congregation.
10. **The Areas of Major Differences.** The most severe conflicts centered around moral behavior, decision making, the lifestyle of the pastor, the role of the pastor, the purpose and mission of the church, and basic Christian beliefs.

"Shepherds Need Feeding Too!" Care of the Minister

"The pastor is never able to get any distance between himself and his work."

"Nobody's perfect - the first rule in surviving stress in the ministry."

"The parsonage can be the loneliest place in the area."

"I think our pastors need more study, rest and leave time to insure longer pastorates."

"If I had known he was feeling under such pressure, I would have helped. Why is it that pastors sometimes won't let you help them?"

These personal statements reflect a consistent concern by both clergy and lay persons about the well-being of the minister. Obviously, the lack of sufficient renewal of the pastor's own life will affect negatively the relationship with the congregation. It appears that many ministers are more effective giving than receiving adequate care.

The three primary places of deficiency seem to be: **personal life, family life and professional life** through continuing pastoral education.

1. **Personal Life.** Some ministers, in the attempt to respond to the endless demands of ministry, have not paid comparable attention to their own needs for **spiritual, emotional and physical nurturance**. As a result, a growing number feel spent, used up, disillusioned, disenchanting, and even cynical. It is estimated by one researcher in this field that one out of four ministers is "burned out." That is, without paying adequate attention to their limits and personal needs, ministers, along with other helping professionals, are often feeling depleted, emotionally and spiritually drained.
2. **Family Life.** Frequently ministers live with the expectations that the needs of the church must come before, not only their needs, but also the needs of their family. Ministers struggle to balance three separate vows made before God: at baptism, they are called into the transforming relationship with Christ; at ordination, they are called to serve God through the church; at their wedding, they are called to serve their wives (and children). Our observation is that frequently family and personal needs for care and growth consistently come last.
Specifically, three major stress points felt by both husband and wife are unrealistic expectations for Christian family life, lack of privacy and lack of adequate family time due to a heavy work schedule. On the other hand, many clergy couples draw significant strength from a sense of sharing in Christian ministry, plus the advantage of support often received from members of the congregation.
3. **Minister's Wife.** The role of pastor's wife appears to be changing. There is no consensus of expectations. Currently, over 50% of pastors' wives are employed outside the home either by choice or from economic necessity. The role is fulfilling for some, but deeply conflictual for others.

4. **Professional Growth through Continuing Pastoral Education.** All professions are experiencing the rapid obsolescence of the initial education received. The pastoral ministry is no exception. Yet, the continuing pastoral education of the minister still seems to hold a low priority - both for ministers and congregations. There is minimal time and money set aside for the continuing growth in competence in ministry. Both church and pastor suffer from such neglect.

Some possible contributing factors for such frequent neglect uncovered by the Commission are as follows:

• Work Addiction

Some ministers feel worthy only as long as they are relentlessly busy. The crowded datebook can become a status symbol of a successful ministry. In contrast to the Gospel, a minister can live and serve as though salvation comes by works.

• Days Off

A clear majority of the pastors completing the questionnaire reported that they spent one day a week away from pastoral duties. Only 7% reported taking two days. 21% indicated taking no days off. Almost half of the church members responding expressed a lack of knowledge about the pastors' time away from pastoral duties. There is a clear indication that many ministers do not give adequate attention to their need to be "off work."

• Work Schedule

Much of the minister's work is when others have leisure time (e.g. weekends, holidays, nights). This complicates having adequate time with the family, particularly if the wife works and children are in school.

• The Unclear Boundaries of Ministry

A minister's work is never finished. A job done - or well done - is difficult to determine and measure.

• Isolation

A sense of isolation was frequently expressed by pastors and their spouses. They tend to strive more or less **alone** to meet the complexities of their ministry and their lives. For many, it is difficult to ask for and receive help and support even when it is available. Fellow ministers may be viewed more as competitors than companions.

• Anti-Educational Bias

There still seems to be an anti-educational bias among some North Carolina Baptists. If education for ministry is supported, it usually is seen as completed in the preparation phase. The lack of commitment to lifelong pastoral development works against the continuing renewal needed for healthy ministry.

"Pastor-Church Relationships Go Through a Lot of Change!"

Transitions in Ministry

"Pastor-church relations are more likely to be healthy if both have entered the 'contract' after careful, prayerful and serious consideration of every possible aspect related to their coming together. Most Pastor Search Committees need better preparation for their tasks."

"I find in this rural setting a tremendously strong resistance to change. Many beliefs held by the church are based on hearsay, family tradition, skepticism of higher learning. Being young and energetic, I find this frustrating." (first pastorate)

"He shared the fact of his termination . . . but did not share his inner feelings with them . . . his termination at the end was hectic - abrupt-anxious."

"Pray, pray that the Lord will call our pastor to another field of service before the church is completely torn apart."

"It is my belief that pastors should be called to their pastorates rather than sending out resumes in hopes of bettering their position."

The relationship between the minister and congregation is constantly

experiencing change. Change is a given. Some changes are deep enough to have a critical impact on the minister-congregation relationship. We believe these critical times to be pregnant with growth possibilities. These "teachable" moments we call "transitions."

1. Interim Transition

a. Termination

When the minister resigns, the minister and congregation are called to do the hard, grief-filled work of terminating a pastoral relationship. Sometimes this occurs with a tragic disregard for the emotional needs of all involved - the minister and family, other staff ministers, and the congregation. Feelings of frustration can remain unresolved which makes it difficult for both the minister, his family and the congregation to move on to their next stage in Christian service. The temptation is to deny these feelings and forfeit the opportunity to face and express the varied feelings, including gratitude for the blessings of that relationship. Congregations and ministers need guidance and support in adequately and sensitively concluding their formal relationship.

b. Pastor-Search Committee

The Pastor-Search Committee has the awesome responsibility of recommending a new minister to the congregation. Our study indicates the need for such committees to have information and guidance in assessing the needs of the congregation, deciding prayerfully the kind of minister needed, processing names, interviewing, clarifying the expectations, introducing to the congregation, and follow-through during "start-up" period.

c. Interim Ministers

Those who serve as interim ministers have a unique oppor-

tunity. Yet, little is provided by the Convention to assist them in understanding the dynamics and unusual opportunities of the interim period.

d. Pastor-Church Covenant

Clear and carefully negotiated expectations and agreements are often lacking at the employment of a new pastor. The study discovered that later serious conflicts were, in part, attributed to the absence of a comprehensive, initial covenant.

2. First Full-time Pastorate

Some ministers choose to be bivocational and may not experience the abrupt transition felt by the persons beginning their first position in ministry. However, seminary graduates who are beginning their first full-time pastorate experience a major transition. The realities of congregational life can be a major change from the supportive academic environment of the seminary or graduate school. Patterns and attitudes are begun that have far reaching ramifications for a pastor's future ministry.

3. Beginning in Ministry: Ordination

Practices of ordination vary throughout the state, consistent with local church autonomy. Our study notes the shaping significance of this event for both congregation and minister. It was noteworthy that among the pastors experiencing high stress, not one considered calling upon the support and guidance of the congregation which had ordained him or her. Perhaps there is a need and opportunity for the ordaining congregation to sustain a caring relationship with the ministers it has "sent forth" into Christian service.

4. Forced Terminations

The Commission studied the needs of both pastors and the

congregation when the termination of the pastor's employment is either requested or demanded. Our findings are:

- There is an absence of trained, skilled, pastoral resource persons who could be invited to assist in the management of pastor-church conflict, leading toward conflict resolution and Christian reconciliation.
- A need exists for some written guidelines which a congregation might follow when termination of a minister becomes necessary. For example, if termination is decided upon, how much time should a minister have for relocation? What about severance pay? What are the minister's responsibilities to the church? "Divorce" obviously does occur between pastors and congregations. Yet in such painful times of anguish, there exists little guidance that sustains just and caring actions for all concerned.
- Once a conflictual termination has occurred, there seems to be inadequate pastoral care of either the minister and his family or the congregation and its leadership. For such crises to be redemptive, the grief, anger, pain and guilt must be understood and worked through. Otherwise, such crises have a way of repeating themselves and the work of the Lord suffers.

5. Desired Transitions

The study uncovered both ministers who wanted to move and members who felt it was time for their pastors to move. This feeling of being "stuck," frozen in a position and place seems to be widespread. It can only result in poor morale, disillusionment, disharmony, and waste of human resources.

The stress around placement is considerable. Contributing factors may be:

- The frustrations of placement are not usually openly dealt with among Baptists.

- If ministers or lay persons feel (within their awareness of God's leadership and present circumstances) that a move is needed, how can they act upon such an awareness? Must they just wait? Our traditional passiveness at this point makes appropriate direct action unclear, tentative and likely resisted.
- The increasing number of ordained, trained ministers adds pressure to placement issues. For example, many seminary graduates, both men and women, are finding extreme difficulty in finding a place of ministry that can adequately support them and their families.
- A growing number of ministers' wives have their own fulfilling careers and do not want to move.
- Some assume that a good pastor can serve all churches equally well.
- The influence of American culture encourages the belief that successful ministry means "moving up the ladder" to larger and larger churches.

6. Ministry Assessment

A change may not involve a physical relocation of ministry. With stages in life and ministry more acknowledged, there is need for ways and resources by which ministers can assess and rearrange their priorities and directions in ministry. Many can change and renew their ministries **without** changing their place of ministry.

7. Retirement Transition

Facing retirement with confidence requires careful planning. The shift to unemployment can create an emotional and spiritual crisis. It is difficult to adjust from leadership to "followership." Also, moving from parsonage living to home ownership requires long-range financial planning. Other areas of adjustment include: social relations, physical and emotional health, and income. Planning for this major transition is the responsibility of both the pastor and the church.

"The Rising Cost of Living Means Rising Stress For Ministers."

Minister's Compensation

"The church figures the total rental value of the house when determining my support package. But when I leave they keep the whole thing."

"I'm glad my church provides a housing allowance. Now, I'll have a place when I retire."

"Don't include travel in compensation; it's a business expense."

"I don't expect the church to pay me any more than they are going to pay the next minister."

The compensation survey forms were mailed to all church and as-

sociational staff. Four hundred and ninety-one were returned in time to be processed: 362 pastors, 237 church staff, 25 directors of associational missions, and 13 associational staff. Twenty-nine were returned too late to be processed for this report.

Fifty-two survey forms for bi-vocational pastors were processed. These showed an average direct income of \$10,566.

Additional study is needed to establish meaningful data for bi-vocational ministers.

"We Don't Serve the Church In a Vacuum!"

Cultural Environment

"Then you get the people who think of you as a Father Mulcahy (of M.A.S.H.). I think clergy are considered to be almost like buffoons. People come up to you and say, 'Hey, Reverend,

make sure it doesn't rain on Saturday for the picnic!'"

"Joan's gotta work. We need the money. But her work schedule means I have to be home on certain nights. And that, you can see, gets in the way of my ministry."

"It saddens me to see the people of a church more concerned with entertainment than evangelism . . . to see a pastor cancel prayer services for two months so everyone, including his children, can play ball."

Cultural Influences on Pastor-Church Relations

The pastor-church relationship is heavily affected by the cultural environment. This relationship bears the marks of the rapid changes occurring all around us. Change should not be viewed as necessarily negative. Yet, understanding these environmental factors is important. Such

Survey Summary Pastor

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	1-99	100-299	300-499	500-799	800-1199	1200-1599	1600 up
Average Church Budget	*	\$42,686	\$75,928	\$145,760	\$264,764	\$364,381	\$629,449
Number of Churches Reporting	10	132	122	63	22	6	7
DIRECT INCOME							
Base Income (Avg.)	\$10,086	\$10,493	\$12,586	\$15,302	\$19,021	\$20,102	\$28,705
High	18,120	17,000	26,000	23,000	32,520	27,707	46,080
Low	7,400	3,800	7,400	10,100	11,160	13,000	15,355
Housing	2,484	2,739	2,984	4,021	4,748	6,267	4,969
Utilities	778	1,134	1,430	1,530	776	800	1,414
TOTAL DIRECT INCOME							
Average	\$13,349	\$14,365	\$18,188	\$20,853	\$25,779	\$27,974	\$39,558
High	26,520	27,700	34,100	31,000	32,520	43,487	46,080
Low	7,800	7,400	10,600	13,700	16,440	19,500	23,255
FRINGE BENEFITS							
Annuity	\$ 1,075	\$ 881	\$ 1,274	\$ 1,629	\$ 2,351	\$ 1,884	\$ 3,677
MINISTRY EXPENSES							
Automobile	\$ 1,174	\$ 1,921	\$ 2,527	\$ 2,800	\$ 3,016	\$ 2,859	\$ 2,925
Conventions	250	371	628	867	861	860	807

*Inadequate information to compute.

Other fringe benefits reported for pastors:

80.7% of the churches provide hospital insurance.

45% of the churches provide life insurance.

32% of the churches provide disability insurance.

awareness should influence the resources offered and drawn upon by both pastor and churches. Some current cultural influences which we felt affecting this relationship include:

- Multiple community service and religious organizations, which compete with churches for participants, financial contributions and leadership.
- An inflated economy.
- Changing roles of women and men.
- "Future shock," changes occurring so fast that the stress from complexity becomes constant.
- General erosion of confidence in and respect for institutions, including the church.
- Priority of self-fulfillment.
- Communications revolution.
- Diversity of lifestyles and values.
- Widespread sense of alienation and loss of meaning.
- Mobility of family.
- Education more interwoven with work throughout a life time.
- Influence of business experience upon the leadership and administrative procedures of churches.
- Regional differences in North Carolina.
- Changing nature of marriage and family.
- North Carolina, a basically rural state facing increasing urbanization, growing population and immigration of persons from other regions of the country.

"Often Help From the Denomination Isn't Known or Utilized!"

North Carolina Denominational Resources

"I find that one of the biggest frustrations I have as a pastor of a smaller church is that very little material is available to help me improve my congregation. Most programs and materials are geared to the larger churches and we have to adjust almost everything."

"Our pastor is active on the associational, state and Southern Baptist Convention level and keeps us informed along with the Biblical Recorder which is included in our budget."

Survey Summary Directors of Missions

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	0-7499	7500-14,999	15,000 up
Average Budget	\$33,236	\$46,009	\$109,308
Number Reporting	6	10	9
DIRECT INCOME			
Base Income (Avg.)	\$8,778	\$12,419	\$15,118
High	13,000	15,265	17,622
Low	5,700	9,400	12,840
Housing	3,668	4,158	5,955
Utilities	1,344	926	1,272
TOTAL DIRECT INCOME			
Average	\$12,946	\$16,808	\$21,501
High	18,000	21,265	25,148
Low	6,700	12,600	17,040
BENEFITS			
Annuity	\$1,188	\$1,778	\$2,186
MINISTRY EXPENSE			
Automobile	\$2,575	\$3,161	\$3,703
Conventions	683	895	1,092

Other fringe benefits for directors of missions:

80% of the associations provide hospital insurance.

88% of the associations provide life insurance.

72% of the associations provide disability insurance.

Survey Summary Church Staff

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP*	800-1199	1200-1599	1600 up
Number of Churches Reporting	40	14	27
DIRECT INCOME			
Base Income	\$13,061	\$11,800	\$16,602
High	17,340	15,689	23,254
Low	6,232	7,406	10,210
Housing	3,087	4,281	2,484
Utilities	586	983	154
TOTAL DIRECT INCOME			
Average	\$16,616	\$16,957	\$19,551
High	22,613	22,614	25,160
Low	8,052	10,911	13,033
BENEFITS			
Annuity	\$1,055	\$1,034	\$1,452
MINISTRY EXPENSES			
Automobile	\$1,122	\$1,352	\$1,221
Conventions	400	493	423

*Information for staff in churches of less than 800 members was inadequate for a clear profile.

Other fringe benefits for church staff:

80.2% of the churches provide hospital insurance.

59.3% of the churches provide life insurance.

32% of the churches provide disability insurance.

The Baptist Convention of North Carolina has been a pioneer and leader among state conventions in providing services to strengthen minister-church relations. Along with applauding such efforts, we discovered in our study two concerns.

1. **Under-utilization.** The study revealed the importance of direct access to local congregational leadership. However, these Convention resources have not been communicated adequately. Many pastors and members of congregations are unaware of these available services. Presently, the *Biblical Recorder* and the *Church Leader* provide the primary means of written communication.
2. **Suspicion.** The Commission encountered some distrust of association and convention leadership. A few pastors and church

members seemed to regard the offer of state resources as an invasion of local autonomy. This concern works against the effective utilization of denominational resources.

The Commission studied the **existing resources** made available by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina which directly aid pastor-church relations. They are as follows:

1. The Department of Pastor-Church Relations
 - Assistance to Pastor-Church Committees
 - Offers support to pastors in transition
2. The Department of Church Administration (Pastoral Ministries)
 - Multiple training events for equipping both pastor and lay leadership in ministry

3. The Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs, Department of Christian Family Life
 - Clergy Marriage Enrichment events
4. The Department of Associational Development
 - provides support and training to Directors of Missions in their ministry to the pastor-church relationship
5. Directors of Missions
 - direct personal resource to ministers and congregation
 - communication link between denominational resources and local congregation
6. Department (School) of Pastoral Care, North Carolina Baptist Hospital
 - Clinical pastoral education, utilizing either the context of North Carolina Baptist Hospital or the congregation being served
 - Pastoral counseling through Ministers' Care Program

Part II.

"Recommendations"

"What actions from the Convention would address the pressing needs discovered in pastor-church relations?" The following recommendations, based upon the Commission's findings, are attempts to answer this question. They are offered with the fervent prayer that, if approved, they will result in resources that will bring healing and strength to this crucial relationship between the ministers and the churches.

A. RECOMMENDATION: Appreciation for Healthy Pastor-Church Relationships

We, as a Commission, recommend that pastors and church members find ways to celebrate the strengths of their relationships.

Comment:

In our study, we discovered much to celebrate. It became clear that many pastors and churches have healthy positive relation-

ships that benefit both parties. We feel a deep gratitude for the many partnerships in ministry existing between pastor and church members throughout our state. It is a relationship through which God continues to work in effective and far-reaching ways.

Specifically, we urge both pastors and churches to find ways to acknowledge with gratitude the strengths of their relationships. Pastor Appreciation Day is held by some churches. A Pastor-Church Appreciation Emphasis would expand the focus to include the congregation as well. The partnership in ministry must be worked at from both directions. Therefore, both parties warrant the focus of appreciation and thanksgiving.

B. Establishing An Effective Pastor-Church Relationship

1. RECOMMENDATION: Assistance to Pastor Search Committees

We recommend that Pastor-Search Committees seek the guidance and information available through the offices of North Carolina Directors of Missions and the Department of Pastor-Church Relations of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.

Comment:

The Commission's study verified the crucial role that the Pastor-Search Committee plays in establishing a strong pastor-church relationship. The selection of a new pastor is the primary responsibility of the Pastor-Search Committee and the congregation. However, guidance concerning procedure can greatly enhance the work of the Committee.

We suggest that such assistance be made available in the following three ways:

- a. A "kit" of appropriate information for Pastor Search Committees.
- b. A video tape on the work of a Pastor-Search Committee.
- c. Directors of Missions be encouraged to give priority to this aspect of their ministry.

The Commission sees four phases in the responsibilities of a Pastor-Search Committee:

- a. The study of the congregation's present needs and strengths, plus an assessment of the type of pastoral leadership needed.
- b. Agreeing on a procedure by which the prospective pastors will be reviewed.
- c. Attention to the way of presenting the candidate to the congregation.
- d. Welcoming the new pastor in a way that helps a strong beginning.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Pastor-Church Covenant

We recommend that pastors and churches consider establishing a covenant with one another that expresses their mutual expectations and commitments.

Comment:

It became clear to the Commission that one of the major factors creating disruption in pastor-church relationships is the absence of clearly understood and jointly shared expectations. In their place are assumptions that both parties make on the basis of initial impressions and inadequate information. Verbal commitments are made which may be quickly forgotten or overlooked. A regularly reviewed covenant enables pastors and churches to create and sustain a relationship that grows and nourishes both parties. Such a covenant would cover such areas as compensation and time ar-

rangements, planning for mutual evaluation sessions, and procedures for dealing with criticism or conflict.

A suggested covenant could look like this:

A Suggested Covenant For the Pastor-Church Relationship

To establish and sustain the pastor-church relationship between Pastor _____

and _____ Baptist Church of _____

in Christian love for mutual understanding.

Date Covenant Established _____
(Dates are to be filled in or choices indicated)

(Deletions or additions may be made)
Dates, Topics, and Page Numbers of Changes in the Covenant
(Additional pages are to be added with changes)

The Pastor's Expectations of the Church

1. **Trust** in the pastor as a person of integrity dedicated to the work of the ministry.
2. **Support** for pastor by the offer of caring, honest friendship.
3. **Consultation** with the pastor around the concerns of the church so that the work of the church may be coordinated and may benefit from the mutual experience of both pastor and church members.
4. **Concern** for the pastor by periodically discussing agreed upon financial and time arrangements and by proper upkeep of the parsonage.
5. **Authority** for the pastor to preach and teach the Word of God as led by the Holy Spirit, to approve or disapprove the coming of other ministers and religious groups to the church, and to supervise all paid employees of the church.

The Church's Expectations of the Pastor

1. **Competency** in ministry through well-prepared sermons, visitation, pastoral care in crisis situations, administrative and organizational leadership, and the improvement of pastoral skills through continued study.
2. **Availability** by having time arrangements understood with the leadership of the churches and a procedure for being reached in a time of crisis.
3. **Leadership** in worship services, evangelistic outreach efforts, the development of a Christian education program, and the administrative work of the church in cooperation with the church's leaders.
4. **Loyalty** to Baptist beliefs, attendance of denominational meetings and support for the Cooperative Program.
5. **Participation** in civic and community affairs.

Matters of Mutual Agreement

1. The church shall have a Pastor-Church Relations Committee to work with the pastor in keeping this covenant up-to-date, abiding by guidelines of conduct for the relationship, reviewing compensation and time arrangements, arranging for mutual evaluation sessions, handling criticisms of the pastor and hearing his complaints, helping with staff difficulties, and dealing with any problems that may arise.
2. If there is a disruptive conflict in the church, the parties involved should mutually agree to call in a competent person or persons from outside the membership to meet with them and assist them in problem solving.
3. If the pastor is dismissed or resigns under pressure, the church shall pay _____ months salary as severance pay, during which time the pastor shall not be expected to fill the pulpit or perform pastoral ministries. Under ordinary circumstances, the pastor shall give the church thirty days notice prior to the effective date of resignation.

Specific Agreements For This Church

Annual Financial Arrangements

I. VOCATIONAL COMPENSATION

Base Salary: \$ _____
_____ Housing Allowance _____
_____ Parsonage Rental Value _____
_____ Utilities Allowance _____
_____ Utilities Estimate _____
Subtotal \$ _____

II. FRINGE BENEFITS

Retirement Plans: _____ % of Vocational Comp. \$ _____
Health Insurance on Family: _____ Pastor's Part
_____ All _____
Life Insurance on Pastor _____
Disability Insurance on Pastor _____
Tax Deferred Annuity _____
Subtotal \$ _____

III. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

Car Allowance: to be paid _____ \$ _____
*Conventions and Meetings _____
Book Allowance _____
Subtotal \$ _____

IV. NECESSARY EXPENDITURES

Social Security Tax Allowance: _____ Half
_____ All \$ _____
Workman's Compensation _____
Subtotal \$ _____

V. ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Christmas Bonus or Cash Gift \$ _____
Homeowners Insurance on Parsonage _____
Insurance on Pastor's Library _____
Subtotal \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

*PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES - Conventions and Meetings

Conventions and/or conferences:

- ___ Can be used for expenses at meetings attended
- ___ For study leave and continuing education
- ___ For civic club membership expenses
- ___ To be used at pastor's discretion
- ___ To be used as pastor's expense account
- ___ Pastor to give account for reimbursement

Surplus belongs to _____ pastor _____ church

Pastor's Personal Time Use Agreement

The church acknowledges that the pastor's work cannot be rigidly regulated. Because ministry deals with crises and emergencies, on the one hand, and week-end and evening work obligations, on the other, the formal time agreements listed below recognize some flexibility in the pastor's use of personal time.

1. Revivals and Sunday engagements: _____ per year
2. Number of Sundays church pays for supply preachers: _____ per year
3. Weeks of vacation: _____ per year
4. Holidays when church office closed: _____ per year
5. Study conference days: _____ per year
6. Sick leave arrangements: _____ per year
7. Regular week day(s) off: _____ per year
8. Any additional agreements about the pastor's use of personal time: _____

3. RECOMMENDATION: Guidelines for Pastor- Church Conduct

We recommend that pastors and churches consider establishing and maintaining general guidelines for their conduct toward each other.

Comment:

These guidelines provide an opportunity for pastors and churches to express their obligations to each other. They could be used during an installation service. Such statements would also be helpful to Pastor Search Committees, giving voice to mutual experiences.

Suggested "guidelines" could be as follows:

The Pastor's Obligation to the Church

To keep before me that it is God who has called me into His service and that our mutual relationship with Him is our greatest source of strength, love and wisdom.

To fulfill the duties of the office of pastor as a servant of Jesus Christ and his church rather than the church's ruler who always knows what is best.

To address the spiritual needs of the congregation through biblical preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

To listen to and seek to meet our agreed upon expectations that you have of me as minister while also giving sufficient attention to the care of my family and myself.

To manage my money with integrity so as not to bring reproach upon the church, to use my time wisely as an employee of the church and to attempt to make myself available to the people of the church when needed.

To accept the church as an imperfect institution composed of sinners who need love and forgiveness, to work with the elected leaders of the church and its organizations, and to try to be the pastor of all the people in the church.

To acknowledge that constructive criticism from the congregation can be helpful and to be open enough to accept it and profit by it.

To recognize the need for help from outside the church when my role as pastor is endangered, to avoid actions that would harm the church.

The Church's Obligation to Its Pastor

To keep before us that it is God who has called us into his service and that our mutual relationship with Him is our greatest source of strength, love and wisdom.

To respect the office of pastor and to support your ministry as a God-called person as long as you hold that office to which the church has called you.

To guarantee the freedom of the pulpit so that you, as pastor, can preach as you are led by the Spirit of God.

To allow you to be a unique person, refraining from pressuring you and your family into our expectations.

To enter into a written covenant with you as our pastor so that there will be no misunderstanding about financial arrangements, to provide for your support to the best of the church's ability, and to review annually your compensation as an evidence of the church's care and concern for your welfare.

To recognize that, because pastors are human beings who make mistakes, you also need forgiveness and prayerful support like everyone else, and that because of the limitations of time and ability, you cannot do everything and fulfill everybody's expectations.

To confer with you as our pastor about any accusation made against you instead of discussing it in secret, and work with you toward the resolution of differences that may arise between us.

To consider with you the need for counsel from outside the church when there is a disruptive conflict involving our relationship, to give you time to relocate if you need to move, and to provide adequate severance pay if we request your resignation.

4. RECOMMENDATION: Adequate Compensation for Ministers

We recommend that churches and associations determine and provide adequate financial support for their staff.

Comment:

It became clear that, although some positions were adequately supported, many were not. This disparity often exists as a result of neglect by either the minister or congregation. Failure by either party to carefully monitor and update such factors as salary, housing needs, and retirement programs can result in situations that are as embarrassing as they are economically devastating.

The following survey and list of basic financial recommendations can be useful to ministers and churches:

1. Churches and associations should consider the following factors in determining the level of support for the minister:

- a. **The cost of supporting the minister's family**

What does it cost to maintain an adequate standard of living in this community? Family size, age of children, and unique family needs must be taken into account.

- b. **Inflation**

An annual increase at least large enough to offset the increase in consumer prices is necessary. Consider whether increases in recent years have kept pace, and if not, consider an adjustment.

The Bureau of Labor Consumer Price Index for recent years indicates the following percentage of increase:

1942	1973	1974	1975
3.4%	8.8%	12.2%	7.0%

1976	1977	1978	1979
4.8%	6.8%	9.0%	13.3%

1980	1981
12.4%	10% estimate

- c. **Competence of the Minister**

Many elements are involved in the competence of the minister: native ability, understanding of the ministry, education, experience, and commitment.

- d. **Closely related to competence is merit**

How well does the minister do the job? Ministers who serve faithfully and effectively should receive merit increases which exceed cost of living adjustments.

- e. **Ability of the church to support the minister**

The church cannot support the minister beyond its ability. The amount of income of the church and the giving potential of the members will determine what the church can do. However, if the church cannot adequately support a minister, it will be necessary to give the minister freedom to supplement the church's financial support.

- f. **The average income of the church families**

Socio-economic conditions of church communities vary greatly. Median per household "effective buying income" by counties in North Carolina ranged from \$8,444 to \$21,460 in 1980. The pastor's support should be at least equal to the average family in the church.

- g. **Income of other professionals of similar education and responsibility**

Comparing the minister's salary of one church only with that of other churches of similar size and income may be unrealistic.

2. Churches and associations should make a clear distinction between personal income, benefits, and business expense.

It is recommended that the financial support of the minister be considered in the following categories:

- a. **Personal Income**

Personal income for ministers includes salary, housing allowance and utilities allowance. The church or association will want to provide adequate personal income so that concern for financial needs does not detract from an effective ministry.

- b. **Fringe Benefits**

Fringe benefits include group life insurance, disability insurance, medical insurance, and retirement annuity. Provision for these benefits should be standard procedure for church and associational committees considering the support of their ministers.

- c. **Ministry Related Expenses**

Travel, conventions, continuing education, books and entertainment of guests are ministry related (business) expenses and should not be regarded as income for the minister.

It is important that the church budget reflect these distinct categories if the minister is to receive maximum benefit from the support package provided by the church or association.

3. Churches and associations should provide housing as a part of the minister's compensation, either by an allowance or by providing a home. The housing allowance is non-taxable income to the minister. The allowance should be sufficient to cover taxes, repairs, utilities, insurance and mortgage payments. If a minister receives a housing allowance, it permits a choice of renting or buying. This is a complex financial decision that should be made in consultation with the minister with respect to income tax considerations. Recognizing that any income tax saving for the pastor results in additional funds available to him for other living costs, it is desirable that effective tax planning be as much a part of the arrangement as possible.

Generally stated, the tax advantages are as follows:

Parsonage - The value of lodging furnished an employee by the employer usually constitutes taxable income except in the case of housing furnished a minister by his church or association. This means the value of a parsonage furnished a minister by his congregation constitutes tax-free income.

Housing Allowance - Recognizing that many churches and associations do not own a parsonage, Congress expanded the tax-exempt housing concept to include properly designated payments by a church or association to its minister with which he provides his own housing. This means that the amount expended by the minister for (a) rent and utilities, if renting a home, or (b) the principal, interest, taxes, and utilities, if purchasing a home, is tax-free income so long as the amounts are properly designated by the church or association as housing allowance payments prior to the beginning of such allowance, and are actually expended for the authorized purposes. Even with no salary increase, a significant part of the minister's earnings can be converted to tax-free income through

proper action by the church or association.

Relatively new on the scene is an arrangement referred to as a **deferred housing annuity**. This is a fund created and maintained by the church or association for the purpose of accumulating a sum of money for the purchase of housing for its pastor at retirement. The minister has no control over this fund in the interim and thus he realizes no taxable income prior to maturity of the annuity.

It is important not only that both minister and church or association be aware of the possibilities in the area of housing for the minister, but also that they plan and review together periodically in order to maintain on a continuing basis the best possible arrangement for both.

4. Churches and associations

should provide as fringe benefits group life insurance, disability insurance, medical insurance, and retirement annuities.

For the employees of the church or association the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention recommends:

- a. That the church or association participate in the "New" Southern Baptist retirement program, depositing an amount equal to 10% of each employee's total compensation.
- b. That the church or association provide life, disability, and medical insurance protection for each full-time employee, furnishing at least one-half of the premium cost as an employee benefit.
5. Churches and associations should consider the following as recommended minimums and move beyond them.

Recommendations Pastors

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	1-99	100-299	300-499	500-799	800-1199	1200-1599	1600 up
DIRECT INCOME							
Base Income	\$11,400	\$13,000	\$16,000	\$18,000	\$22,000	\$26,000	\$30,500
Housing	4,500	4,680	5,250	6,275	7,050	8,300	9,700
Utilities	1,800	1,820	2,050	2,450	2,750	3,200	3,300
TOTAL	17,700	19,500	23,300	26,725	31,800	37,500	43,500
BENEFITS (Age 40)							
Retirement ¹	\$ 1,770	\$ 1,950	\$ 2,330	\$ 2,673	\$ 3,180	\$ 3,750	\$ 4,350
Life Insurance (Yearly)	540	540	540	540	540	540	540
Hospital (Yearly)	989	989	989	989	989	989	989
Long-term Disability (Yearly)	160	174	218	232	319	392	465
Social Security offset ²	1,655	1,823	2,179	2,499	2,975	3,501	4,064
TOTAL	5,114	5,476	6,256	6,933	8,003	9,172	10,408
MINISTRY EXPENSE							
Travel	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,600	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,650
Conventions/conferences	950	950	950	950	950	950	950
Other	350	425	525	625	725	825	5,525
TOTAL	3,800	3,975	4,575	4,960	5,325	5,425	5,525

¹At least 10% of total direct income.

²9.35% of total direct income in 1982. Social Security self employment tax is taxable income.

Recommendations Church Staff

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	0-799	800-1199	1200-1599	1600 up
DIRECT INCOME				
Base Support	\$15,000	\$17,000	\$20,500	\$22,500
Housing	4,850	5,350	6,550	7,250
Utilities	1,900	2,100	2,550	2,850
TOTAL	21,750	24,450	29,600	32,600
BENEFITS (Age 40)				
Retirement ¹	\$ 2,175	\$ 2,445	\$ 2,960	\$ 3,260
Life Insurance (Yearly)	540	540	540	540
Hospital (Yearly)	989	989	989	989
Long-term Disability (Yearly)	203	232	290	334
Social Security offset ²	2,032	2,285	2,766	3,050
TOTAL	5,939	6,991	7,545	8,173
MINISTRY EXPENSES				
Travel	\$ 1,490	\$ 1,660	\$ 2,075	\$ 2,490
Conventions/conferences	950	950	950	950
Other	425	500	575	650
TOTAL	2,865	3,110	3,600	4,090

¹At least 10% of total direct income.

²9.35% of total direct income in 1982. Social Security self employment tax is taxable income.

Recommendations Directors of Missions

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	0-7499 Small	7500-14, 999 Medium	15,000 Up Large
DIRECT INCOME			
Base Support	\$13,500	\$16,250	\$19,500
Housing	4,400	5,200	5,400
Utilities	1,700	2,050	2,100
TOTAL	19,600	23,500	27,000
BENEFITS (Age 40)			
Retirement ¹	\$ 1,960	\$ 2,350	\$ 2,700
Life Insurance (Yearly)	540	540	540
Hospital (Yearly)	989	989	989
Long-term Disability	174	218	261
Social Security offset ²	1,831	2,163	2,526
TOTAL	5,494	6,260	7,016
EXPENSES			
Travel	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,600	\$ 4,300
Conventions/conferences	950	950	950
Other	450	550	650
TOTAL	4,500	5,100	5,900

¹At least 10% of total direct income.

²9.35% of direct income in 1982. Social Security self employment tax is taxable income.

5. RECOMMENDATION: Seminars on Beginning New Pastorates

We recommend that seminars be conducted on a regular basis which address the critical issues of beginning a new pastorate, especially the first pastorate.

Comment:

The Commission discovered that a pastor's acceptance of a new or first pastorate creates a critically important "teachable moment" - both by him and the church. It is a time of high energy and motivation, a time of excitement and fright. The recommended seminars would include key church lay leaders in addition to the pastor in a setting designed to enhance the sharing of mutual hopes and concerns. Such seminars might be sponsored twice annually, in spring and fall.

C. Maintaining An Effective Pastor-Church Relationship

1. RECOMMENDATION: Pastoral Support and Evaluation

We recommend that pastors and churches consider establishing a procedure by which their relationship in ministry can be periodically evaluated.

Comment:

Our study noted two critical needs of pastors: (1) consistent encouragement and (2) feedback and evaluation. Churches could provide for both needs by asking existing groups or committees to assume pastoral support and evaluation responsibilities by forming a Pastor-Church Relations Committee. This support and evaluation group could provide a congregational listening post for the pastor and a setting for review of the pastor-church covenant, ministry evaluation, compensation needs, and other issues growing out of pastor-church relationships.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Personal and Professional Growth for Pastors

We recommend that additional training events for pastors' personal and professional development be offered through Convention resources.

Comment:

These events would center around spiritual growth, both congregational and pastoral, through Bible study, understanding and clarifying the pastoral role, identifying support needs, and developing pastoral skills for crisis ministry and congregational leadership.

Specifically, the "God-Called Minister" seminar to be offered at the Caraway Conference Center in 1983 under the coordination of the Ministers' Care Team could offer a major opportunity for pastoral development. This supports one of the recommendations of "82-85" Planning Committee.

A training center for ministers is a needed resource.

3. RECOMMENDATION: Directors of Missions

We recommend the Directors of Missions be given priority in Convention support and training due to their vital role in pastor-church relations.

Comment:

The crucial opportunity that Directors of Missions have in affecting pastor-church relations is a major conclusion of the Commission. They have the delicate task of leading the association without violating the autonomy of the local church. In regard to their position of ministry, we suggest:

- a. That more educational opportunities be made available to Directors of Missions in pastoral care and counseling, consultative skills, conflict management, leadership training. We encourage Directors of Missions to take advantage of these growth opportunities.
- b. That Pastor-Search Committees utilize the resources of the Directors of Missions.
- c. That Directors of Missions consider helping the association to provide support groups for ministers and ministers' wives.

- d. That there be a clear covenant between the Directors of Missions and the association which would include mutual expectations, job descriptions and specific agreements.

- e. That Directors of Missions consider inviting a responsible group within their association to be a source of periodic evaluation of their ministry.

4. RECOMMENDATION: Ministers' Marriages

We recommend that the strengthening of ministers' marriages become a high priority in Convention programming and service.

It became clear to the Commission that inadequate and/or broken marriages have a significant effect upon the ministers' careers and the lives of the congregations. Too often ministers and their spouses deny their stresses and fail to deal with them until it's too late for effective remedial action. Clergy couples are encouraged to seek appropriate counseling or enrichment opportunities in order to confront those matters which might hinder Christian growth in these areas of their lives. Existing opportunities include the cost sharing Ministers' Care Program and Clergy Marriage Enrichment retreats sponsored by the Baptist State Convention.

5. RECOMMENDATION: Ministers' Wives

We recommend that additional seminars be offered to ministers' wives enabling them to affirm the joys of ministry and to find support and resources for dealing with the frustrations of their role.

Comment:

As noted in the "Findings," there is no clear pattern or role for the wives of ministers. Each wife, with her husband and congregation, is forced to clarify her own sense of identity. The lack of consensus requires such personal exploration. Dealing with the often conflicting

expectations from church, husband, and self can be awesome.

These educational events sponsored by the Baptist State Convention would provide the context and aid in their efforts toward fulfillment and service as persons. The support from other pastors' wives would be particularly helpful.

6. RECOMMENDATION: Ministers' Support Groups

We recommend that the establishment of support groups for ministers under trained leadership be encouraged through the Division of Church Programs of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and North Carolina Directors of Missions.

Comment:

The Commissions' study demonstrated the isolation frequently felt by the minister. Many pastors requested assistance from the associational or convention leadership in encouraging and even organizing pastor support groups. Other pastors, presently participating in such groups, spoke of their personal value.

These support groups would consist of fellow ministers. They would provide a confidential, caring context for sharing personal and pastoral concerns.

Professional leadership of these groups is strongly suggested. Generally, the sharing of leadership among the group is not satisfactory. The support group is a setting in which the ministers can relinquish primary responsibility for leadership and focus on their own needs. A leader, experienced in group leadership, allows the group to reach a level where points of stress can be addressed in a redemptive manner.

D. Conflict in the Pastor-Church Relationship

1. RECOMMENDATION: Outside Consultation Available

We recommend that a network of resource persons be available for pastoral consultation to churches at a time of conflict between minister and congregation.

Comment:

The study of the Commission revealed the need for outside assistance during a minister-church conflict. Some lay leaders and pastors indicated that they would have utilized such help. These resource persons, both clergy and lay, would be trained for and skilled in helping both sides clarify the issues involved and offer a process by which the issues of differences could be managed, and if possible, resolved. Ideally, a team, consisting of both clergy and lay persons, could be invited by the congregation to serve in this way.

This recommendation acknowledges the fact that serious conflicts may arise between minister and church and that caring, competent outside persons can provide a service and perspective not possible by those so emotionally involved. It also acknowledges and seeks to utilize those committed Christians in our North Carolina Baptist State Convention who possess skills in the pastoral management of conflict and who would be willing to serve Baptist churches in this manner.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Ministers' Care Program

We recommend that the North Carolina Baptist State Convention continue to offer cost-sharing pastoral counseling to full-time Baptist ministers and their families through the Ministers' Care Program.

Comment:

During the spring of 1980, the Ministers' Care Program began as a cooperative ministry between the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and the Department (School) of Pastoral Care, North Carolina Baptist Hospital. It came from the growing awareness of the

vital importance of the emotional and spiritual health of ministers and their families.

Through an agreement with the School of Pastoral Care of the North Carolina Baptist Hospital, pastors of churches cooperating with the Baptist State Convention and their families have available a number of specialists in pastoral counseling. The staff of the School of Pastoral Care will also provide referral resources to other qualified counselors and therapists within the state to honor preferences or prevent extreme travel distances for ministers and families.

These services are provided in an atmosphere of complete confidentiality. The names of those receiving services are not reported. A call to one of the School's Pastoral Counseling Centers will set in motion the procedures to connect the minister or family member with a counselor to prevent long delays in receiving help. The counseling fees for the program are paid for on a participating basis between the Baptist State Convention and the counselee.

3. RECOMMENDATION: WATS (800) Line for Consultation

We recommend that a WATS (800) line be made available whereby ministers could seek immediate counsel in regard to pastoral concerns.

Comment:

Ministers need ready access to pastoral resources that would assist them in their ministry. A WATS (800) line would make such assistance close at hand. The telephone contact would be with a trained, experienced pastoral counselor who could provide consultation. The pastoral concerns might include: help with a counselee; options for a family in crisis; referral resources; help with a family; and conflict with the church. An advantage of this would be the minimal amount of initiative and time required on the part of the minister.

E. The Future Studies in Minister-Church Relationships

RECOMMENDATION: Future Studies

We recommend that the Ministers' Care Team facilitate future studies in minister-church relations.

Comment:

The Commission regards its study as preliminary and exploratory. This report is a first step toward a continuing effort to study the needs in minister-church relations as a basis for the planning of future assistance and support.

Other areas for possible study are:

- a. Multiple Staff Relations.
- b. Bi-vocational Ministry.
- c. Pastors' Wives and Families
- d. Smaller Churches
- e. Women in Ministry

F. The Administrative Structure for the Convention's Continuing Response to Pastor-Church Relationships

RECOMMENDATION: Implementation of Present and Future Concern for Pastor-Church Relations

We recommend that the administrative structure for implementing Convention resources to pastor-church relations be through the existing Minister Care Team and through the establishing of an ex-officio group to serve with the Church Program Advisory Committee of the General Board.

Comment:

The Commission is including in its recommendation a way by which the results of this report could be implemented.

Two awarenesses buttress this recommendation. One, there presently exists a Ministers' Care Team which consists of persons already employed in assisting

pastor-church relationships. This Ministers' Care Team seeks to coordinate and plan services of support. Because this group had been formed, the Commission chose to re-enforce its role rather than recommend the employment of additional staff personnel for the implementation of future services. The Ministers' Care Team is comprised of the following:

- (1) Service - Director, Department of Pastor-Church Relations; Director, Christian Life and Public Affairs (Minister's Family); Director, Associational Development (Directors of Missions).
- (2) Equipping (training) - Representation from faculty, Southeastern Seminary; Director, School of Pastoral Care, North Carolina Baptist Hospital; and Consultant, Church Administration (Pastoral Ministries).

The second awareness was the Commission's belief that a group of persons **not employed by the Convention** needed to assist the Ministers' Care Team in the further planning and implementation of services and training to pastors and church leaders. This recommended ex-officio group would advise and work with the Ministers' Care Team.

This sub-committee would consist of nine members, elected to a three-year term. Initially, three members of this committee would serve one year, three two years and three three years, thus establishing a system of rotation. Members would be allowed to serve an additional term without interruption. Members would represent the following groups - pastors, lay leaders and professionals with particular skills in the development of pastoral and church leadership.

This ex-officio group, along with the Ministers' Care Team, would be responsible for securing, administering, and budgeting funds for future implementation of pastor-church enrichment.

Conclusion

We, as a Commission, want to end this report on an emotional note. "Study," "findings," and "recommendations" are words that do not convey the depth of feelings experienced by us throughout this assignment. In closing, three words in particular capture our spirit - **appreciation, concern, and challenge.**

Appreciation. We appreciate the cooperation of so many pastors, church members, and denominational leaders throughout our state. We were both surprised and gratified with the widespread interest in the work of our Commission. We are grateful to God for the sense of teamwork we felt with each other and with others who assisted us in our task.

Concern. We realize that this report will raise expectations, and in some cases, expectations that cannot be fully met. Our concern is that some persons might expect too much, too soon. At best, this report is a helpful and practical **next step** in our journey together as servants of Christ and His church.

Challenge. We have felt challenged by the strengths, needs and possibilities of pastor-church relationships and in turn, want this report to be experienced as a challenge. Stress in this relationship is the most pressing concern facing many churches today. We feel, and want North Carolina Baptists to feel, the challenge of bringing to bear the needed resources upon this central partnership between pastor and church members. The pastor and lay leaders continue to be a crucial link in the long chain of God's loving activity in history. It is a link we must appreciate and fortify!

Commission on the Ministry: Mahan Siler, Chairman; Cline Borders, Joe Burnette, Bob Dale, Culver Dale, George Ellis, Betty Gilreath, Marse Grant, Burrell Lucas, Betsy McLean, Billy Mobley, Bill Redmond, Fred Sandusky, Bill Shackleton, Martha Barnes and Brigitte White.

Ex-officio members: Cecil Ray, Dewey Hobbs, Bob Bruhn, Doug Cole, Talmage Williams.

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